Shelby's Back in the Game
Dr. Todd was able to get Shelby back in the game after a torn ACL.

They Gave Me Hope
David’s lung function has improved after utilizing WCH Pulmonary Services.

Collaborative Healthcare
Dr. Basali and Dr. Yu work together to provide treatment plans for back pain.
Outpatient Pavilion Grand Opening

After a year and a half of construction, our north wing expansion project opened in November 2017.

Shelby's Back in the Game

Shelby Miller's senior year of high school athletics didn't go as planned after she tore her ACL. Dr. Michael Todd was able to get her back into the game.

They Gave Me Hope

With the help of rehab and regular doctor visits, David Fleming was able to vastly improve his lung function through WCH Pulmonary Services.

Surviving Cancer, Embracing Reconstruction Surgery

When making the personal decision to have reconstructive surgery after a breast cancer diagnosis, three patients explain why they chose Dr. James Slaby as their surgeon.

Cardiac Device Specialist

Patients Terry Schench and John Estill are thankful to have a Cardiac Device Clinic nearby, as WCH is the only facility in this area to offer such services.

Collaborative Healthcare

Pain management specialist, Dr. Basali, and spine surgeon, Dr. Yu, work together to provide treatment plans for patients suffering from back pain.
Shelby’s Back in the Game

It’s a story that sports medicine doctors hear all too often. That telltale “pop” happens during a high school or college athletic event and the athlete is left watching from the bench. In Shelby Miller’s case, it happened during her senior year at the start of a very promising basketball season.

Shelby, who attended Northwestern High School, was looking forward to her last high school basketball season and hoping the Huskies would clinch the WCAL title and make it out of districts. The basketball and softball standout was also looking forward to playing softball at Heidelberg College in the fall.

During the third game of the season, she went up for a layup, came down wrong, and heard the “pop. I knew something was really wrong,” she said.

The athletic trainer did a quick assessment, and Shelby ended up on crutches, watching the rest of the game from the bench.

Shelby remembers waking up in an excellent outcome, “said Dr. Todd. “That’s not an easy thing for a player to hear. They have a finite window of playing time and want to be healed yesterday. But if they commit to the rehab plan and train smart, they will be back on the field playing with a solid stable knee.”

“Shelby worked hard at rehabilitation even though it can be painful. But in the end, it was her motivation to succeed and get back on the field that resulted in an excellent outcome,” said Dr. Todd. “My part was very minor. Shelby’s work ethic and desire is what made her surgery a success. She was exemplary.”

For more information contact
Ohio State Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine
330.202.3420
It turns out those commercials were right – when you have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), it does “feel like an elephant is sitting on your chest,” said David Fleming, of Rittman. And David should know; he’s been fighting that diagnosis for the past seven years. With grit, determination and the help of some “fantastic Wooster Community Hospital (WCH) Health System doctors,” David has turned what was a “death sentence” into a story of hope. 

David, who owned and operated Top Notch Painting for 25 years, first noticed symptoms of the disease in 2010. While he used to climb 40-foot ladders with ease, he began to feel “winded” when he noticed symptoms of respiratory illness, and committed to pulmonary rehab. His success is an inspiration to all, and the credit completely belongs to him.”

His last pulmonary function test (PFT) showed improvement “by leaps and bounds,” said Christina. “Our goal is typically to maintain lung function, but in this case he had seen several improvements. Back in 2015, David was using a wheelchair to get around; he didn’t have the breath to walk even short distances. He was debilitated. He has been fighting that diagnosis for the past seven years. With grit, determination and the help of some “fantastic Wooster Community Hospital (WCH) Health System doctors,” David has turned what was a “death sentence” into a story of hope. 

Dr. Arthur is optimistic about David’s future as well. “When patients are actively participating in their own care, great things can happen.”

David was the perfect patient for pulmonary rehabilitation in that “he had a lot of self-determination and the desire to get better,” said Jim Freehahn, Clinical Manager of Cardiac-Pulmonary Rehabilitation. “Pulmonary Rehabilitation is a long-term commitment and you have to be dedicated and compliant with the program.”

The program is a 60-minute duration which consists of 30 minutes of aerobic exercise and 30 minutes of educational instruction three times a week.

“The education was just as helpful as the exercises,” said David. “They taught me how to breathe, relaxation techniques, how to handle stress and gave me nutritional advice.”

“These rehabilitation programs don’t make a lot of money for the hospital but they’re crucial for a patient’s health,” said Jim. “I give the hospital administration a lot of credit for offering these services. It’s very unusual for a hospital of this size to offer all the programs we do.”

Since opening a practice at WCH a little more than three years ago, Pulmonary Medicine of Wooster has “tried to do things a little differently,” said Dr. Arthur. “We have 30-minute appointments to facilitate education of patients. We attempt to empower patients through education to take control of their health care. We don’t focus on the past, just actions that can improve health moving forward.”

“We’ve seen a lot of success stories like David’s,” said Jim, and “we’ve seen a lot of successful transplants. It’s a tough regimen and you have to be committed to following through. A transplant patient will do pulmonary rehabilitation before and after their surgical procedure, and it requires specific protection such as anti-rejection medications, but David’s determination and compliance make him an excellent candidate.”

David credits WCH for saving his life. “I never felt like my doctors saw it as just a job,” he said. “I went through most of their departments and I was never treated with anything but respect. Before I found WCH, I was going downhill fast. I thought I was dead. Now I have hope. I have the best doctors and healthcare I could ask for and I owe them everything.”
Kelsey Pajak grew up minutes from Wooster Community Hospital (WCH) Health System. But when she was diagnosed with breast cancer in May 2017, she sought treatment nearly an hour’s drive away.

“The doctor who ordered the mammogram was in Wadsworth. We were seeing her for natural child care to Wooster. “Somehow we made it happen between my husband and my dad,” Kelsey says, noting that her cancer treatments were so debilitating she could not drive. The worst part, she adds, was that she went for long stretches without seeing her children.

“I did not want my kids to see me in so much pain. We sent them to stay with family and friends,” she says, noting that her third round of chemotherapy included immunotherapy that made her so sick and weak that at one point she went five days without seeing her children.

At that time she and her husband started working with her doctor in Canton to transfer her care to the WCH Health System – Wooster Cancer Care. “I said, ‘We can’t sustain every round of this, going to Canton and having the kids cared for by others. We have stretched everyone way too thin,’” Kelsey recalls of the heart-to-heart talk she had with her doctor in Canton.

“We decided, together, to switch care to Wooster Cancer Care,” she says.

Kelsey credits WCH Oncology Patient Navigator, Polly Johnson, for scheduling a prompt appointment with Dr. Mansour Isckarus, a medical oncologist with The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute (OSUCCC – James) who provides care for patients at WCH.

“He spent close to an hour just discussing everything. Jerome, my husband, was with me, and we both felt really good about transferring care,” Kelsey says, half-joking that, when she had her consultation with Dr. Isckarus, she felt as though she were his only patient.

Kelsey says she and her husband were even more certain they had made the right choice a few days later when she developed a high fever that landed her in the WCH ER.

“They got me in immediately. I don’t even think I sat down in the ER, they just took me in,” she recalls of the quick response by the emergency staff.

She adds that she and her husband were even more relieved to quickly see a familiar face in the WCH ER.

“It was nice because Dr. Isckarus was on call. I was thankful that I had met him and he was familiar with my case,” she says.

Kelsey has no shortage of words when asked to describe other benefits of her care close to home. First, she says she was surprised to learn that WCH offers oncology services and the support of a big-city hospital.

“In 2013, WCH Health System/Wooster Cancer Care teamed up with one of the nation’s leading cancer care providers, the OSUCCC – James, as part of their James Cancer Network to provide oncology services.” Polly Johnson explains. “In December 2017, Wooster Cancer Care added radiation therapy and moved the practice into the newly constructed Outpatient Pavilion on the WCH main campus. Now our oncology patients have all services and Wooster Cancer Care physicians under one roof.”

Because WCH is five minutes from her home, Kelsey is able to take advantage of all the support services WCH offers.

“It is an amazing, wonderful resource,” she says of the WCH breast cancer support group, where she has met many new friends dealing with many of the same issues.

“I keep saying this diagnosis was a blessing in my life, because it has drawn me closer not only to people I know, but it’s brought me so many people whom I may never have met,” she adds. “It has taught me the meaning of life.”

Kelsey does not dwell on the many hardships she’s faced in coping with cancer; instead, she focuses on the positive experiences of her journey. She believes the end to her treatment is in sight and that she has a long, full life ahead of her.

“Honestly, I am getting near the end of the journey, and there is a light there. I am getting closer to it every day,” she says.

Kelsey feels closer to her family and her community, especially her community hospital.

“The care at WCH is amazing, and such a blessing in our lives, from everyone who has come forward,” she says. “I can’t begin to express the appreciation we have, because there are no words to share how much each person has touched our lives.”

For more information contact
Wooster Cancer Care
330.262.2800

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For more information contact
Wooster Cancer Care
330.262.2800
"I think every woman that has a breast cancer diagnosis should have an evaluation by a plastic surgeon to discuss her breast reconstruction options," said Dr. James Slaby, plastic and reconstructive surgeon at Wooster Community Hospital (WCH) Health System. Dr. Slaby is known for his kind and caring manner with breast cancer patients who are seeking reconstruction.

"Plastic surgery is a visual specialty that combines surgical expertise with artistic excellence," Dr. Slaby explained. "Because of my attention to detail, I am never satisfied and I always strive to be better as there is always room for improvement with both current techniques as well as with future breakthroughs in technique."

Dr. Slaby is also meticulous in making clear that a patient’s first priority is to take care of the cancer. Next, he stresses that whether or not to have reconstructive surgery is a very personal decision.

"(Breast reconstruction) can help to soften the blow of the emotional trauma associated with a breast cancer diagnosis." Whether or not to have the surgery is a decision involving many factors. "The important takeaway that I give patients," said Dr. Slaby, "is if you want breast reconstruction, you deserve it."

Christine Schafrath is a patient of Dr. Slaby’s and has experienced firsthand his expertise and his personable bedside manner. "He made me feel so at ease," said Christine. "He’s an incredible doctor." After four years and numerous surgeries, Christine definitely knows her reconstructive surgeon.

Christine’s journey with breast cancer began in 2013 with a lumpectomy and radiation. She had hoped it would end there. However, in 2016, she found herself facing a double mastectomy.

Several surgeries were required to complete the reconstruction. "Dr. Slaby did a great job through all the hard times," said Christine. "He makes you feel like he has all the time in the world for you."

Another of Dr. Slaby’s patients, Cyndy Maglio’s breast cancer story began in 2010. It started out in a familiar way—Cyndy was used to being sent for a recheck after her yearly mammogram. It was always nothing. This time? "I was told I needed to do a biopsy just to make sure," she said.

The results came back and Cyndy was shocked at a diagnosis of invasive ductal carcinoma. "I went religiously to get checked because every one in my family has had cancer."

When Cyndy received her diagnosis, one of her sisters was being treated for non-Hodgkin lymphoma. She had already lost two sisters, her parents, and a grandparent to cancer.

"At this point in time, all I could think about was that my mom had died of breast cancer that had gone to the brain," Cyndy explained. "Back then there was no reconstruction and I had always told myself that if I ever had anything, I would do something about it."

As soon as she discovered her cancer would require a mastectomy, Cyndy began to plan for reconstructive surgery. "I really wanted to stay here in the area, yet they insisted it would be good to get a second opinion."

She traveled to Cleveland for the consult. "It felt very cold to me. It just didn’t feel comforting."

In contrast, Cyndy described her first visit with Dr. Slaby. "I probably looked like a scared rabbit," she laughed. "It was like they took my hand and guided me through the whole thing. Dr. Slaby was so calming. He told me what to expect. He described everything that would happen. If I didn’t understand, he explained it further."

Another patient found comfort in Dr. Slaby’s and has his own unique style of helping patients relax. "He will help them decipher the information which can sometimes feel like information overload," he said.

Dr. Slaby is a shining example of the personal connection that is pervasive with the care at WCH.

"When I woke up from my surgery," Cyndy shared, "He was there. He treated me with such kindness and respect. He is one of those gems you find in the middle of a haystack—a kind, caring man."

Melissa Wise has been appreciative of her entire WCH Health System experience. "Everybody has been so wonderful," she said. "They are so kind. They helped get me back on my feet."

"I didn’t understand, he explained it further."
The heart is an amazing organ. Every 60-seconds it pumps about five quarts of blood through a system of vessels that if stretched out, would be over 60,000 miles long. It beats about 60,000 miles a week, “said Sue. “The heart’s natural pacemaker regulate its pace. “A problem with the heart’s natural pacemaker or the wires carrying the impulses can cause a slow heart rate and can be a sign that your heart needs a little help,” said Sues. “Patients need to return for an incision and device check and for follow-up instructions. Every three to six months after that, the devices need to be routinely checked so adjustments can be made, if necessary. “We offer these services five days a week,” said Sue. “Patients have the choice to be seen personally or we can monitor their devices remotely using a box that transmits information from the pacemaker to a secure website through cellular towers or WiFi. We check the devices to ensure proper function and to optimize for the patients needs.”

Terry Schenck, of Wooster, is sure glad the Cardiac Device Clinic was there for him this past year. Without the pacemaker Dr. Cyril Ofori implanted into his chest last year, he’s pretty sure he wouldn’t have lived to see the new year.

Terry, age 67, who has a history of longevity in his family, noticed his heart rate kept going down during the fall and he was feeling dizzy. When his heart rate decreased to 30 beats per minute he called Dr. Paul Moodispaw’s office and they scheduled a visit. A few hours later they called him back. “We need to see you tomorrow,” he recalled them saying.

They scheduled surgery for a pacemaker to be implanted by Dr. Ofori. Terry had the surgery and went home the next day. “Terry was a good candidate for a pacemaker because pacemakers generally treat slow heart rates or uncontrolled heart rates,” said Dr. Ofori.

“Immediately I felt great,” Terry said. “It was just a 45-minute procedure under local anesthesia. I was awake and joking with the staff before and after the procedure.” Four days later, it was no laughing matter.

Terry and his wife were enjoying seafood at an area restaurant when he had an allergic reaction to the seafood. “I was shaking, started swelling up and had hives all over!” He went straight to the ER at WCH, where they diagnosed his allergic reaction and treated him. His blood pressure had dropped. “If I didn’t have the pacemaker in, I don’t think I would be alive today,” he said. “The pacemaker kept my heart rate up until I could recover.” He is very grateful to Dr. Moodispaw for recognizing his heart problem and getting him sorted out.

Today, Terry is back to feeling great and taking care of his 15-acre farm. Chopping wood, mowing and acting as a handyman for a nearby veterinarian is his “workout plan. I don’t do treadmill,” he said. “I’ll never use one, but I do enjoy keeping in shape working on the farm. I hope to go through quite a few more (pacemaker) batteries.”

John Estill of Millersburg is another patient who is grateful for the acute heart care he was able to receive locally. The retired systems analyst felt great until he hit his 60’s. “Then my health started going downhill,” he said. He was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in 2001 and shortness of breath followed. A longtime smoker, he gave up smoking and did fairly well until a heart catheterization in 2003 revealed stenosis in his heart passageways. He had quadruple bypass surgery in 2003 and continued to be monitored over the next few years by Dr. Ofori.

In 2015, Dr. Ofori, who noticed John’s “heart muscle was very weak after his heart attack and bypass surgery,” suggested it was time for an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD). Two bouts of pneumonia finally convinced John to get the implant. He had it implanted locally by Dr. Emile Daoud from The Ohio State University. “We are the only facility offering these services locally since the Cleveland Clinic stopped their service. Devices have become an important part of treatment of heart disease and they have improved the lives of hundreds of area residents.”

For more information contact Wayne Hospital
330.320.5700
With physicians working closely together across disciplines, Wooster Community Hospital (WCH) Health System is able to provide patients with a wide variety of options for managing and alleviating chronic pain.

Dr. Elizabeth Yu is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Orthopaedics Division of Spine Surgery with the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Dr. A. Harris Basali is Medical Director of The Pain Management Institute, conveniently located at the WCH main campus.

The two doctors join forces to offer patients the opportunity to look at all possible avenues available for the treatment and cure of chronic pain.

“The collaboration with myself and Dr. Basali benefits our patients by maximizing all nonsurgical treatment options before surgery, if the patient is a surgical candidate,” said Dr. Yu.

“I can discuss patients on a personal level [with Dr. Yu] and put a treatment plan together,” Dr. Basali explained. “That definitely improves the patient outcome.”

Local patient, Susan Lehman, experienced firsthand the benefits of the care available through this collaboration when she unexpectedly found herself experiencing chronic and severe pain.

“I woke up and had pain along the back of my leg,” explained Susan. “I could hardly bend over more than just a few degrees.”

With the diagnosis of a badly ruptured disc, Susan resolved to try everything possible in an attempt to alleviate the pain. “I was really hesitant about the idea of back surgery,” she said. “I wanted to make sure I tried other things first. I didn’t want to rush into dramatic treatment.”

When physical therapy provided no relief, Susan was referred to Dr. Basali. “I enjoyed working with him. I’m very curious and I wanted to make sure I understood. He was very patient and explained all the different treatment options.”

Dr. Basali performed a selective nerve root block, “as a diagnostic tool trying basically to isolate and identify the source of pain. The back is very complicated and the challenge is to identify what really hurts. Joints, ligaments, discs, muscles, nerves—all could be a source of pain.”

This type of procedure assists the surgeon in deciding what type of surgery may be needed, and improves the chance of successful treatment.

“We try to do everything possible to not do surgery,” said Dr. Basali. “Surgery is a last resort. Dr. Yu and I agree on this concept.”

Dr. Basali described three categories of ways his department collaborates with surgeons. “There is before—where we treat and maybe don’t need the surgery. There is diagnostic in preparation for surgery.” And if pain persists after surgery, the two collaborate on that issue as well.

When Susan was still in pain after several months of treatment, Dr. Basali referred her to Dr. Yu. “I really liked Dr. Yu’s interactions,” said Susan. “She said I looked like I would be a good candidate for a procedure she specializes in. She made sure I understood exactly what was going on and all the options.”

The procedure is called a minimal microdiscectomy. “She was able to go home the same day after surgery,” said Dr. Yu.

“It was so convenient to be able to do everything in Wooster,” said Susan. “If I had needed to drive somewhere else it would’ve been so much more difficult.”

Susan explained how the coordination of services between the two physicians facilitated her treatment and recovery. “It was really helpful... the pain management provided by Dr. Basali gave me time to think about the surgery and give my pain an opportunity to resolve. It gave me time to see if my body was going to heal without surgery and helped me figure out what my treatment options should be.”

Dr. Yu shared that “the collaboration between myself and Dr. Basali benefits our patients by maximizing all nonsurgical treatment options before considering surgery.”

“Two brains are always better than one!” said Dr. Basali. “In my opinion, the most important party in this collaboration is the patient.”

The service overall at WCH Health System made Susan’s healing journey one where she could focus exclusively on her treatment and recovery. “I was really impressed. You could tell that WCH Health System has made it their goal to have the incoming patient experience as smooth as possible.”

For more information contact Ohio State Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine

330.202.3420
They Saved My Life

“When I had a heart attack, WCH was my first choice for heart care.”

— Lyn Lavery

Since Interventional Cardiology was launched a year ago, over 300 successful angioplasties and stents have been performed.

For more information contact 330.263.8144

www.woosterhospital.org